

General Miscellany.

A SURMISE.

BY LOUISA BURNELL.

Our moral day breaks from the great unseen,
Whither once more it darts its vanishing
Two shadowy goals with faltering steps between—
O, tell me, which is life, and which is death?

Not is this but an idle questioning;
For every step must cross some dark surprise,
Since life and death are what the moments bring,
And we would know them through their strange disguise.

Joy we shall have that blossomed in the shade,
And grief that out of sweetest dreams awoke;
Doubts that grow clear, and certainties that fade;
A weary crown, a light and easy yoke.

Wreaths we shall see made servants of the right;
The noblest victories won by those that fall;
Great hearts that triumph, falling in the fight;
Death hand to hand with life, behind the veil.

Thus evermore we meet our pathway thread,
Mid lights that beckon, shadows that dismay;
Till the bewildered heart, so strangely led,
Wonders if life or death shall win the day.

As one might wonder, waking from a swoon,
And seeing the far horizon light align—
Is it the morning broadening to the noon?
Or is it evening sinking into night?

Or is one standing on the silent shore
If it be ebb or flow can scarcely guess;
Whether the lesser flowing to the more,
Or but the greater lapsing to the less.

O shrouded mystery! the baffled soul,
Long coasting round thy solemn boundaries,
Divines the rounded brightness of the whole,
That first must wane upon these mortal skies.

The tide, when it lays bare the lonely strand,
But lifts more high the great mid-deeps of sea;
Does death work life? Does losing all the hand?
Does darkness feed the light that is to be?

O, then it is no longer life and death,
But life and life, in ever-circling light,
Then ebb and flow of fortune or of breath,
Are equal tides that lift us to our height!

—Atlantic for June.

THE WEDDING BONNET.

"Miss Marland are you busy?" and a comely looking woman, receiving no response to her rap, opened the door and looked in upon her guest, who was seated near the open fire-place in an attitude of deep thought.

"Busy, no not at all," was the reply, and a lady somewhere in her twenties arose to receive her hostess.

"I'm sorry to trouble you Miss Marland, but dear heart," she said hastily as she gazed upon the tear stained face and glistening lashes, "I'm afraid you've your own troubles. Have you had bad news from your sister Alice?"

"No news of any kind Mrs. Carver. This rainy, dreary weather depresses me strangely, and I have been recalling painful events which had better be forgotten. But excuse me," and the lady turned her fair pale face and darkly blue eyes upon her hostess. "Can I serve you in any way? If so I shall be delighted."

"Well, I don't know, you see this was my wedding bonnet, I've had it fourteen years. It will be fifteen years this coming Thanksgiving, and its most as good as new now. It's funny to think of, but James bought it after we were married," and the good woman laughed a chortle, rippling laugh. "James used to say I looked better in it than any bonnet he ever saw me wear and so I thought, 'mebbe the mill'ner in the village could make a hat out of it for me. In course I could buy a new one outright, but I've a sort o' hankerin' for this that I wore when I was so happy, a sort o' tender feelin', just as I have for the little babe I bore but never seen, and yet long for; and I thought too, mebbe the sight of this bonnet would call to James's mind those old days, for some ways, he seem to 've got tired of me; no, not that exactly, but p'haps you've noticed his likin' for that girl he brought here," and she glanced with a flushed guilty look into the face of her listener.

A motion of assent was the only reply. "The Lord only knows where he got her. You see he got a letter that made him feel bad, but he said 'twas business, and went off for a week, and brought this girl home with him, as he said, to help me. James used to say I was the prettiest girl goin', and I'm sure he worked hard to get me, but I'm only an old shoe now," and the sad, pathetic voice gave way, and torrents of tears welled up from her overladen heart and coursed down her face.

Agnes Marland was silent and perplexed in the presence of this woman's grief. What could she, a comparative stranger, say to soothe the wounded pride and aching heart of the wife who believed herself deceived of her husband's affection and confidence. Yet in her heart she believed the wife mistaken, and stealing softly to the side of the weeping woman, she said gently:

"Dear Mrs. Carver, you do yourself injustice, and as I firmly believe, your husband a great wrong. I have, it is true, observed Mr. Carver's partiality for the friendless girl, but it is like himself, undisguised and frank. Did you not tell me your youngest brother's wife was your husband's daughter?"

"Yes, but what of that Miss Marland?"

"Not anything just now, but if you have any ribbon or lace that you can look up, I can make, I think, a neat, becoming hat, and let the wedding bonnet rest from its labors."

"Mother, mother," called a twelve year old Susie from the kitchen, and Mrs. Carver hastened to reply to the summons, pausing at the door to ask "if that black lace veil would be any count."

"Just the thing," was the reply, "and I observed a bunch of lace in the kitchen we shall need."

Left alone, Agnes Marland descended the stairs in pursuit of her host, whom she readily found, and after a short consultation, went back to her room well pleased with the result of the conference. Mrs. Carver soon joined her guest, with a quantity of ribbons and laces, which Miss Marland assented, then said:

"Now please take that old sewing chair, and make yourself comfortable, and then tell me the history of that bonnet."

tired waiting on her, and hollered 'Jennie hurry up with that spider.' 'I can't find any spider,' said she, so I went, and laws sakes, what do you souse the girl was lookin' for? Why, sure as you live 'twas one of them nasty Jonny-long-legs. But there, that aint what you asked, but I'll try to tell you.

Last summer there was two young ladies coming here to board, but couldn't stand it to eat with the family, as they said there was no silver forks, napkins or finger glasses. For my part I didn't know that the table was the place for napkins, and we have heaps of glasses, but mebbe they're not finger glasses. Then when you came, I saw you did not want to shame us, and when once you forgot and used your fork, in a minute you took up your knife again, and I said to myself God bless her, she's a lady, and 'fore she goes away I'll ask her about them things."

"I will gladly explain anything in my power, but at present I am anxious for the story."

"Ah, well there's no gittin' 'round it as I see. You mind that old yellow house on brother Tom's place, well that was the house I was born and lived in, till I came here. My father was a thrifty, fore-handed farmer, my mother was 'lowed to be the neatest woman in the townshile, with a kind word and pleasant smile for everybody."

When I was fifteen she died, and in less than a twelve month my poor, deluded father married our hired girl. God forgive me for accusing her, but to this day I can't help thinking that she poisoned my mother. Then she was so mindful and tender to father, waited on and petted him like a baby, and the upshot was he married her.

From that time the old place was 'at home. While mother lived it was that cosy and cheery that everybody liked to come there, as our doctor said on 'count of its restfulness and sweet home peace. For myself, I could stand it, but 'twas awful hard on father and the boys. Then I asked father to build a house for the two boys and me, 'tinkin' she would be better to him if we was gone; but father shook his head, and said 'twont do Phemy, 't'wont do, and walked away. Soon after that my married brother Dick, came along, and called me out to the fence."

"Phemy, says he, the folks in our district want you to teach school, and I told them you would."

"But Dick," said I, "I don't know enough to teach."

"Not know enough to teach such little shavers, then you must be green, besides I'm the director, and I guess you'll pass."

"But Dick," said I again, "I can't leave the boys here for her to thrash and starve."

"Well, who said you could, the boys are going to live with me, and you can board at our house too, if you want to."

"I begun my school the next week, boardin' round most of the time, and I tell you, I found out then that folks didn't live like my folks. One place where I boarded was just the meanest, dirtiest hole I was ever in. They asked me to go there, and then tried to scare me out, but I made up my mind to stick it out. One night I got there before the table was set, and the woman said, 'Jen now we have the school-marm, we must be nice and have a table cloth. Go to Tom's bed and bring the sheet.' Jen came back with a black, ragged sheet, and laid it on the table."

I washed my face in a milk-pan, and then asked for a towel, and the woman slipped to the table and tore off a piece of the sheet and offered it me; 'much obliged,' said I, 'I'll use my handkerchief,' and that made her raving mad at my big feelings. When I went to bed, I found that my satchel had been opened and a note dropped in. Cep, their oldest boy, a great big lubberhead, wrote it, and likened me to a great big sunflower, and a mighty nice strawberry, and wanted to marry me. I tell you I was hopping mad; so I dropped the thing on the floor, picked up my satchel, and walked right over to my brother's."

Father made me promise to go home and stay over Sundays, and when I got home that week my father's wife said she had a letter from Cep Jenkins for me. I told her she might keep it or burn it, as I didn't want it. And then she said I'd better take him. She knew I wanted to get married, and she'd help me get ready, and give me a right smart heap o' bedding. That made me so mad I screamed right out, but then I seemed to hear my mother say "count ten Phemy dear," and I turned away without saying a word.

The next Monday morning Dick took me over to my school, and on the way, spoke uncommon high 'bout a youngish man who'd lived in the neighborhood a couple of years. And then, in a sly sort o' way, asked me what I thought of him. I said that I didn't know James Carver, but I liked his looks."

"He likes your looks too, and asked me if you had any beaux." I told him that Phemy wouldn't look at any of the young fellows 'round here. "Well," says he, "I've a notion to try," and I told him to try ahead. So be ready, Phemy," and Dick gave me a letter. In course I gave him a favorable answer, and in less than a month my father and brother were building this house. But some way it hurt me; it seemed indecent to be in such a hurry, but I knew 'twas cause they were sorry for me, and wanted me to have my own house where I could have my brothers with me. James went to Ohio to tend to some business, and I kept on with my school, happy as a cricket most o' the time, 'cause somebody loved me. When James got back my school was out, and the house was finished and furnished all ready for our wedding. One night when we were out riding James said he had something to tell me that he was afraid to. "Then the sooner told the better," I said, with a laugh, but still he hesitated.

"Is it sumthin' you're 'shamed of?"

He got white as a corpse then, and set his jaws together 'st like a bull-dog, and said, "Not as I know of, but Phemy I've deceived you."

That scared me, and I said, holding my heart as I spoke, "be you a married man James Carver, for God's sake tell me!"

"No, but I am a widower. Now don't be angry Phemy dear," and he tried to put his arm around me, but I shook it off. "Why didn't you tell me this before Mr. Carver? I wont take any woman's leavin', and then not to trust me either, and the big tears plashed down upon my hands."

"Dick told me if I wanted to get you I mustn't tell you, and you know how I did want to get you, but Phemy I wish now I'd told you, for I've felt all the time 'twas mean."

I was awful mad, but I didn't say anything more, but choked down the ugly, mad words. I knew I loved him if he was a widower and so I'd make the best of it. Just then a man stopped us. "I was goin' over to your house said he, to see if I could get you to teach our school." James, to save me I 'spose, said "no, Phemy wont take it," then I spoke up, "yes, I'll take the school and begin Monday," and so I did, but that was awful up-hill work. James went back to Ohio, and I kept on the best I could, passin' every day the new house waitin' for its mistress, until in the middle of the term I was taken with brain fever, and when I came to, I was lyin' in my room down stairs, and James was standin' by me, and a pretty girl of ten was bathing my hot hands. I aint agoin' to tell what was said or done, but we were married in a few days, as James wanted to take care of me, and the girl was his daughter Clara. James went to town one day, when I was able to sit up, and brought back this bonnet and some new clothes, as he said, for his bride. Soon after, father came to live with us and got a divorce from that woman; while I was so sick, and father was with me, she had been living a shameful way, and so he gave her money and things and she left the country. Tom married Clara two or three years ago, and they live happy as per mice.

When we were married I felt real sore at James havin' some one to love besides me, and 'cause I wanted him to forget his first wife, I made him promise not to bring any of her relatives here, and I must say he has kept his word."

Agnes Marland was enlightened at last, but said nothing on the subject. "I am much obliged Mrs. Carver, for your story, and now please permit me to arrange your hair as you must wear it with this bonnet. There, that will do," she added a few minutes later, "and now please go and put on your garnet dress. May I get it myself?" A pretty garnet soon enclosed the good woman, and then Miss Marland added a linen set clasped with garnets.

"These you will wear in remembrance of me, if you please, and Mrs. Carver, a gentleman requested me to say he wished to see you in the parlor immediately."

"To see me, law, who was it Miss Marland?"

"You forget that I am a stranger here Mrs. Carver; when you return you may tell me who it is."

Truly, dress produces a wondrous change; the careworn faded woman of thirty-two had disappeared, and the handsome, well-dressed one, who half an hour later, accompanied by her husband, appeared before Miss Marland smiling and happy, was a very different looking person from the weary, dispirited wife doubtful of her husband's love.

Evidently there had been explanations between the pair, which had resulted in restored confidence and harmony.

"I am much obliged to you for this handsome woman," the farmer said in a triumphant tone, looking at his wife as he spoke.

"I knew you would admire her," was the reply, "and now I wish your judgment in regard to this bonnet, adjusting it as she spoke. There, Mr. Carver, isn't it pretty, and is not the face under it as pretty as that which wore the wedding bonnet?"

"Far prettier and far dearer," was the reply of the highly gratified husband, with evident admiration in his eyes.

A short pause ensued, during which the farmer withdrew.

"Miss Marland, James has just told me that Jennie is his niece. Her mother died a short time ago, leaving her child to his protection, and through the miserable promise made to me, he didn't know what to do. I'm glad he told me, and will use the girl just as I do my Susie. I'm so 'shamed of myself, but for all that am glad I came to you, for I knew you could help me."

"Say, rather it was the wedding bonnet, for when you spoke of your husband's promise, I felt sure that was the cause of the trouble."

It is said that every family has its skeleton, sometimes more imaginary than real. Happy beyond the power of language to express, is that family whose skeleton is laid, and where father, mother and children dwell together in sweetest concord.

—Mrs. L. B. Collett in Milwaukee Monthly.

Endive, Broccoli, and Egg-Plant.

Endive, when the plants have made six to ten leaves, should be transplanted into rows about sixteen inches apart, by two to twelve inches in the row. It is not a plant commonly cultivated in the West except by the German population, and by them it is used as a Winter salad. For this purpose sow the seed from the middle of July to the first of August, transplant as directed, and when the plants have attained sufficient size in the Autumn, gather the leaves of the plant together in a conical shape, and tie together at the top with strips of bast matting or other soft material, which will cause them to blanch and lose much of their otherwise bitter taste. Before frost sets in take up the plants with a ball of earth and transplant them thickly together in a dry cellar, or set in a trench outside, as for celery, and cover from frost. Treated in this way they make a salad crisp and but slightly bitter, much relished by many persons.

Broccoli is a species of cauliflower and is treated precisely as cabbage except when the curd or head gets the size of the fist, the leaves are broken over it, or drawn together and tied, to preserve the edible part white and tender. It must be used before it begins to run to seed, and while it is yet firm and hard.

Egg-plant is a tropical plant, susceptible to the slightest frost. A strong heat is necessary to germination. The plants should be transplanted into the richest, moist, warm quarter of the garden, at a distance of two and one-half to three feet from each other. The large and beautiful fruit is the edible part, which is cooked when half grown, by being peeled, sliced and fried brown and soft in fresh butter. It is delicate and much sought after by those who have acquired a taste for it.

—Agricultural Paper.

—Mr. Alexander Stephen, a Glasgow shipbuilder, has received from the Emperor of Brazil the decoration of a Knight of the order of the Rose.

Adventures of a Letter.

The Portland Oregonian, of a recent date, says: Yesterday, we were shown a long letter written by a gentleman while on his way from New York to San Francisco via Cape Horn. Connected with this letter is an unwritten history as remarkable as true, and which we here give. In the year 1849, a gentleman named Nichols embarked on board a sailing vessel at New York, bound for the then famous gold fields of California. Mr. Nichols came from Massachusetts, leaving behind him a young wife and several daughters. During the tedious passage from New York to Cape Horn, he employed a portion of his somewhat painful leisure time in writing a letter to his family, consisting principally of advice to his daughters, most of whom were quite young. When off the Cape, a terrific storm arose, and for many hours the vessel was expected to founder. During these hours of desperate peril, Mr. Nichols supposed that crew, vessel, and all would go down. Impelled by a kindred motive, it might be supposed, which prompted the great discoverer, Columbus, hundreds of years ago, when in a similar position of danger, to commit to the mercy of the waves a sealed letter, Mr. Nichols cast adrift the letter he had indited with such tenderness and kindly interest to his family. The letter was rolled up into the smallest convenient compass, and placed in a bottle which was tightly corked and sealed with wax. However, the vessel weathered the gale in safety, the storm abated and, in due time, passengers and crew arrived in safety at their destination. Escaping the perils of the coast, Mr. Nichols soon forgot the circumstance of the letter, and became engrossed with the cares and excitements incident to mining life. But strange as it may appear, after two years of buffeting from the sea, the bottle containing the letter was stranded on the Chilian coast, when it was accidentally picked up by some sailing master or miner. From appearances, the bottle was supposed to contain liquor; but, on drawing the cork, the letter was discovered. The bottle was broken, and the letter, which was perfectly dry, taken out and the contents read. The finder, whoever he was, felt sufficient interest in the matter to forward the letter to its destination the first opportunity. After nearly three years, this mislaid letter reached Mr. Nichols' family, having drifted in its course more than a thousand miles before being picked up, and passing several thousand miles to reach the Atlantic seaboard. Meantime, Mr. N. quitted California, and returned home some time subsequent to the receipt of the letter. The very remarkable history connected with this letter caused it to be carefully preserved. Two years ago, the youngest daughter of Mr. Nichols married and came to Portland, bringing her father's letter along. The letter bears evidence of great age and much usage. Such a souvenir is worthy of careful preservation.

Step-mothers.

The cruel step-mother is the *bête noire* of fairy-land, and is not unknown in real life. I have seen step-mothers who, if left to my judgment, would have been speedily doomed to outer darkness, where are weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. And I have seen step-mothers whose care and patience and tenderness and wisdom were not to be excelled. Between these two extremes comes every grade of goodness and badness.

It is not to be concealed that the relation is one of exceeding difficulty. It is, in a sense, unnatural. The natural way is for husband and wife to see their children grow up, to live to a good old age, and to die full of years and honors. When the wife dies prematurely, the whole current is set back. There is confusion, derangement, and almost inevitable injury. It is seldom that the remainder of life is more than a partially successful effort at restoration. No one knows better than the conscientious and sagacious step-mother how irreparable is the loss which the mother and the children have both sustained. Whether it is better supplied by the assumption on the father's part of the whole responsibility, or by the substitution of a foreigner for the lost mother, admits of question. When we see a step-mother reckless, cold, and cruel, or even when we see one really endeavoring to do her duty by the children, yet doing it without heart, without warmth, without sympathy, without success—priding herself on meeting abundantly all their material wants, yet with no loving appreciation of their inward nature, and never securing their confidence—we are ready to condemn the whole relationship. When we see a father beaming to his bereaved daughters a very tender mother for tenderness and watchfulness, a companion and confidant in school and social life, their most intimate and trusted friend, making for them a bright home, and a happy life, training them up to respectability, usefulness, and grace, keeping the image of their mother fresh and her memory green, doing her honor as the one woman of his life, and avowing by his daily walk, his belief in immortality and his expectation of a glorious reunion, then we say this is the true course, though in some things we see that the home and the daughters show the lack of a woman's tender training and fine touch. But another man marries a wife whose great heart enfolds his children not only from love to him, but pity for them. The home which was forlorn grows warm and attractive. The children, who were a little wild and shabby and inharmonious, are once more clothed and in their right mind. Another father, who remains true to his last wife, presides over a house which daily deteriorates. Irregular meals, improper food, insufficient and inappropriate dress, uncared-for children straying in the streets, a house waxing constantly more dreary, comfortless, and repulsive—these make even a step-mother seem not the most unpromising establishment in the world. —Gail Hamilton, in Harper's Bazar.

That Fraction.

An ingenious individual with a turn for mathematics has found there is one pig to every one and four-tenths men in the United States. There is nothing singular at all that every man should have a pig, but when four-tenths of a man buys a pig, the event becomes a matter of deep interest to everybody who strives after a higher civilization. The mind instantly pictures this four-tenths of an individual

getting home with that pig, and buckling up against fences, and splashing into the mud, and kicking at the animal just enough to miss it and swing off its balance; and while we have a long array of precedents to show that no whole man ever drove a pig in the right direction, we can well believe that four-tenths of a man wrestling with that animal would afford a spectacle that would be nourishing to the last degree. This, of course, is confidential. —Ez.

Vienna.

There is no more agreeable and amusing place in the world to live in than the capital of Austria, though perhaps to enjoy its full savor one should be an Austrian. Have Austrian connections, or belong to some one of the great families of Europe, who are recognized in all countries as preserving an undefined right of entry into every court and drawing-room. In spite of constitutional experiments, the Viennese nobility are still very exclusive, even more so than the Faubourg St. Germain in Paris; and the court does not acknowledge the quality of merchant, collect he millions never so wisely. Democracy has, however, so far innovated that Vienna has now a very extensive and luxurious society of commercial people, who give dinners—which is not the custom with the aristocracy, the hospitality of such nobles as the Schwarzenbergs and the Lichtensteins assuming the shape of *fetes*—and travelers are readily admitted into this society if they will only act as roving Englishmen do, and as roving Frenchmen and Italians do not—that is, keep out of political scrapes with the police, who are still more watchful than the altered state of the country might lead one to suppose. Even the stranger, though, who has neither business nor social position to secure him admittance anywhere, need never be at a loss for entertainment in the Kaiserstadt. To begin with, there are the theaters, which are cheaper, and, in some respects, better than most of those in Paris. They are the great resorts of all classes, from the Croatian bagman to the emperor, who may be seen in his white uniform four or five evenings a week laughing boisterously at those broad farces, which are nowhere better put on the stage, or at the operettas of Offenbach, which are generally brought out at Vienna within a month of their production at Paris. A good feature in connection with the theaters is, that they are always over early enough—generally about half-past ten—to admit of supping, which is a national custom allowing of no eradication, and which floods the streets of Vienna with light, animation and festivity, up to the hour when all the thoroughfares of London look like frozen water-tanks. Another good point consists in the Viennese summer theaters, which are not boot-like contrivances with shouting robes in spangles outside; but merry, well-lit, and delightful gardens, where one can spend one's evenings in the dog-days lounging in an easy cane-chair, and inhaling comedy or drama between the puffs of a Smyrna cigar and draughts of iced and yellow lager-beer. Ladies abound in these gardens, and uncommonly pretty they, most of them, are. They have none of the milch-cow stolidity of Prussian dames, and their maidens do not affect the dreamy sentimentality which reads so well in Feuerbach's novels, and is such an insufferable bore in real life. They like jewelry, dress in smart bright colors, greet one always with a smile, which displays the pearly teeth for which they are so famous, and are not perpetually on the *qui vive* about propriety, though certainly none the less virtuous for all that. Austrians have often been compared to English, and they resemble the better class of our countrymen in the neatness of their dress, their love of field sports, and their general bearing and complexions. But in their social characteristics they incline toward the French, living much out-of-doors, and being ever willing to come out to the café with you. Call upon an Austrian at what time you please, and let him be busy as he may, he somehow always finds leisure to stroll out with a chance friend to eat a piece of goose-liver cake, drink a *schoppen* of ale, and smoke a cigar. The word "intrusion" has no place in his vocabulary. If he be a merchant, he will cheerfully leave Providence to sit at the receipt of customs for him in his absence; or if he be one of those learned doctors of law who waddle about the pavements in such numbers, he will look as though he desired nothing better than to be called away for a few hours daily from the study of the classics he professes to love. —English Magazine.

How to Prevent Sunstroke.

As we are soon to experience a heated term, the following specific against sunstroke may save from illness and death many whose occupation obliges them to be in the field or out upon the streets:

"About a year since I saw in a newspaper an account of a case of sunstroke, written by the party himself. After suffering a long time from the attack, and having to a considerable degree recovered, he experienced suffering even from the rays of the moon. This led him to the reflection that it was not altogether the heat of the sun that produced prostration. After much research he discovered that the injury came from the chemical ray, and not from the heat ray. He was guided to this by observing the fact that a photograph could not be taken through a hollow glass. Accordingly he lined his hat with two linings—one of orange yellow to arrest the chemical ray, and the other of green to arrest the heat ray. Thus prepared, he went where the rays of the sun were most intense with perfect impunity. It is well known that the negro is seldom or never sun-struck. The color of his skin over the skull being of the orange yellow may assist in accounting for the fact. I practiced upon this suggestion all last summer, lined my hat with green and orange yellow paper, and had confidence enough in the truth of the theory to neglect my umbrella, which I had never done before. I mentioned it to many, who tried it also, and in many cases that came under my observation they uniformly asserted that the oppressive heat of the sun upon the head was much relieved."

—King Victor Emanuel's visit to Vienna and Berlin, according to a usually well informed journal in Rome, has for its object the securing of new guarantees for Italy, as the Italian government no longer relies upon French sympathy or support.